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Local diffusion networks act as pathways to sustainable agriculture in the Sacramento Valley

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Abstract Text:

Greater sustainability is one of the main goals of agricultural and natural resource policy in California and worldwide. "Diffusion networks" which consist mainly of connections among producers, local outreach and education agencies and agricultural organizations, provide critical pathways for achieving sustainability. We analyzed the role of diffusion networks in the context of agricultural water-quality management in the Sacramento River Valley. Data from 1200 agricultural producers demonstrates the role of diffusion networks in increasing satisfaction with environmental policies, participation in water quality management programs and the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices.

Impact Statement:

A Conditional Waiver for discharges from irrigated lands has been extended to 2011 as a regulatory approach to protect the surface water quality in the central valley of California. The waiver applies to the Sacramento Valley as part of the central valley. Currently, 8,600 operators in the Sacramento Valley coordinate surface water quality monitoring and seek to resolve agricultural related water quality concerns. Findings from this research give quantitative insights into how and why farmers and the agricultural support industry have responded to concerns about non-point pollution to manage water quality.